

**BASIC SITE INFORMATION**

<b>Site Name(s):</b>	Mount Hope Cemetery	<b>Location Description:</b>
<b>Location:</b>	1133 Mt Hope Avenue	Cemetery bounded by Mt Hope Avenue to the east, Elmwood Avenue to the south, U of R Intercampus road and Genesee River to the west, and residential properties fronting a portion of McLean St to the north.
<b>Coordinates:</b>	UTM: (Datum: WGS-84) Zone:18T E/N:287153,4778778	
<b>Tax ID:</b>	136.370-0001-001.000	
<b>Existing Zoning:</b>	O-S (Open Space)	

**PARK INFORMATION**

<b>Park Type:</b>	Picturesque Cemetery
<b>Size:</b>	+/- 192 Acres
<b>Dimensions:</b>	Varies
<b>Topographic Description:</b>	Varies (Cemetery is portion of Pinnacle Range that includes Cobbs Hill Park and Highland Park)
<b>Date of Construction:</b>	1838
<b>Landscape Architect(s)/Designer(s):</b>	Silas Cornell, George D. Stillson
<b>Current landmark designation status:</b>	Contributing site in the National Register-listed Mt. Hope/Highland Historic District and the Mt. Hope Preservation District

**CURRENT DESCRIPTION**

Mt. Hope cemetery is a large historic municipal cemetery featuring highly varied terrain at the end of the Pinnacle range of hills, adjacent to the Genesee River. The cemetery incorporates several entrances along Mt Hope Avenue and an entrance along Elmwood Avenue. Spatially, the park is divided into two sections. The southern half of the cemetery includes a newer gridded layout, with mostly contemporary burials. The northern portion of the cemetery features many historic burial sites and a highly varied path system, characterized by narrow, twisting cobble and asphalt drives around significant land forms, valleys and hills.

At the north end of the cemetery, along Mt Hope Avenue, the cemetery's original gatehouse is located left of an ornamental park entry gate. The entry drive continues west into a parking courtyard within a steep-walled glen. A noteworthy ornamental fountain exists in a grassy area of the glen, fronting a the cemetery's original chapel and crematory, which has been partially built into the hillside. From this courtyard glen, cobble drives snake up in elevation around the glen's perimeter, leading to a twisting assortment of secondary pathways that continue around the parks unusual topography.

The entire cemetery contains a considerable variation of funerary sculpture, wrought iron work, and landscape masonry. Many crosses, statuettes, draped urns, and obelisks dot the parks small peaks, topographic depressions, and hillsides. Slopes have been slightly terraced in many places, forming curving bands of clustered burial plots, family plots, stairways, and viewing platforms. Winding paths

continue towards the rear of the cemetery (west) and south towards the more gridded and flat burial sections along Elmwood Avenue.

The cemetery also features an exemplary collection of plant species, including massive pastoral shade trees, wooded groves, hedgerows, and flowering ornamental trees.

#### LAND USE HISTORY

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Mount Hope Cemetery is significant as the first American rural cemetery planned, developed, and maintained by a municipality. Dedicated in 1838, it is an early and influential example of the rural cemetery, laid out in a picturesque style. Other early examples include Mount Auburn, in Cambridge, Massachusetts (1831), Laurel Hill, in Philadelphia (1836), and Greenwood, in Brooklyn (1838). Rural cemeteries, which were located on a city's outskirts in a naturalistic setting, helped to popularize a new, romantic landscape style and also provided much-needed open space in growing cities, often serving as unofficial picnic grounds prior to the establishment of city parks.

The land on which Mount Hope was created is naturally dramatic, composed of rugged terrain created by glaciers. Despite some early concerns that such hilly land was unsuitable for burials and difficult to access, the city purchased the land from Silas Andrus in 1836 and began laying it out. The city surveyor, Silas Cornell, acted as the first landscape architect, deciding on the placement of roads and clearing trees. The cemetery was dedicated on October 3, 1838, featuring a dedication address that praised the natural beauty and practical advantages of the site.

In 1847, George Ellwanger and Patrick Barry donated 50 shade trees from their nursery, which was located right across Mount Hope Avenue. These trees set the stage for what became a significant collection of horticultural specimens.

Architecture in the park likewise demonstrated the highest quality. The chapel dates to 1862 and was designed by local architect Henry Robinson Searle. The existing gatehouse, the third on the site, was designed in 1874 by Andrew Jackson Warner, a prominent Rochester architect. An ornamental fountain and gazebo were added near the entrance in 1875. A.J. Warner's son, J. Foster Warner, also a notable local architect, designed the crematory in 1912.

The cemetery is the final resting place for numerous local leaders and other locally significant figures, as well as several nationally significant people. Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Isaac and Amy Post, John Bausch, Henry Lomb, both A.J. and J. Foster Warner, George Ellwanger, George Selden, Hiram Sibley, James Cunningham, Seth Green, Lewis Henry Morgan, Daniel Powers, and G. Hartwell Carver are just a few of the many notable people laid to rest here.

There are also many examples of significant funerary art in the cemetery, including the Dr. Hartwell Carver monument, the Ellwanger and Erickson monuments designed by Italian sculptor Nicola Cantalamessa-Papotti, several monuments by innovative local architect Claude Bragdon, and the Firemen's Monument.

The fact that the cemetery was a municipal, rather than private, venture, attracted notice as well; 19<sup>th</sup>-century historian William F. Peck noted that "Mount Hope has received name and fame, widespread,

not only for its loveliness of aspect, but from the confidence that no fiscal embarrassment would cause neglect that would dim its beauty or make insecure its possession.”

For more information, please see the very detailed *Mount Hope Cemetery Cultural Landscape Report, Tree Inventory and Management Plan*, prepared by Heritage Landscapes LLC et al. for the City of Rochester and Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, May 2009.

#### ELIGIBILITY EVALUATION

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The 2009 Cultural Landscape Report for the cemetery includes the following statement of significance:

The unique historic significance of Mount Hope Cemetery is locally and nationally recognized and protected through incorporation in one of Rochester’s preservation districts and the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). The entire northern half of Mount Hope Cemetery and a portion of the southern half are included in the National Register-listed Mount Hope-Highland Historic District. The 1974 NRHP nomination includes a 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century period of significance, although it does not indicate specific dates. It also identifies significance in the areas of landscape architecture, architecture, commerce, social/humanitarian, transportation, and urban planning. It should be noted that both the period and areas of significance indicated refer to the entire historic district rather than just the cemetery...

The Mount Hope Cemetery cultural landscape incorporates historic significance to varying degrees under all four National Register criteria for determining the historical significance based on association and integrity. The cultural landscape of the cemetery is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of United States history. The historic landscape remains as a testament to the history of the shifting perceptions of death and burial and the spread of the rural cemetery movement in the United States. The cemetery is also associated with the lives of persons significant in the past including: notable designers, architects Henry Searle, Henry Robinson Searle, Andrew J. Warner, and J. Foster Warner; Italian sculptor Nicola Cantalamessa-Papotti; and figures notable in local and national history, including Susan B. Anthony, Frederick Douglass, Fletcher Steele, Frank E. Gannett, and Lewis Henry Morgan, among many others. The cultural landscape of the cemetery continues to embody distinctive characteristics of a type and period of construction. The cultural landscape of Mount Hope Cemetery exists as a surviving early example of the rural cemetery type as implemented in the United States where the use of grounds was designed not only as a functional cemetery, but as a picturesque setting for quiet reflection and passive recreation. The landscape may contain archaeological sites with the potential to yield evidence of prehistory or history, particularly as the major ridgeline, Indian Trail Avenue, served as an important Native American route through the area. Overall the landscape of Mount Hope Cemetery is significant under criterion A as an example of the evolution of burial practices in the United States; criterion B for its association with numerous prominent designers and historical figures; criterion C as a landscape distinctly characteristic of the rural cemetery movement; and to a lesser degree, criterion D for potential archeological remains. The historic significance and high integrity of Mount Hope Cemetery

indicates that the landscape is eligible for individual listing in the National Register of Historic Places and potentially as a National Historic Landmark as well.

For more information, please see the Cultural Landscape Report, which provides great detail on the significance and integrity of the cemetery.

#### SITE CONDITION

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Mount Hope Cemetery includes a vast number of historical elements; including buildings, memorials, and funerary sculpture. The conditions of the park's historic features vary extensively. Some burial plots have stonework or other features in complete disrepair, while the majority of the park's elements are in satisfactory or excellent condition. Overall, considering the age and number of features, the park is in good condition. Park buildings, including the former chapel, gatehouse, and contemporary buildings located in the southern portion of the cemetery, are well maintained and in good condition.

#### NEIGHBORHOOD CONTEXT

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The neighborhood context of Mt Hope Cemetery includes a variety of residential, commercial, and institutional uses immediately adjacent to the park's boundary. The western portion of Highland Park lies adjacent to Mt Hope Cemetery's original main gate and gatehouse, along Mt Hope Avenue. Residential neighborhoods with commercial activity fronting Mt Hope Avenue continue along the cemetery's eastern periphery. The southern section of the cemetery lies adjacent to Strong Memorial Hospital and medical complex. The cemetery's eastern boundary links to the University of Rochester campus, on the banks of the Genesee River.

#### SOURCES OF INFORMATION

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Heritage Landscapes LLC et al. *Mount Hope Cemetery: Cultural Landscape Report, Tree Inventory & Management Plan*. Prepared for City of Rochester and Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery. May 2009.

"Mt. Hope-Highland Historic District." National Register of Historic Places inventory-Nomination Form. Approved in 1974.

National Register of Historic Places Multiple Property Documentation Form, "The Municipal Park System of Rochester, NY." 2003.

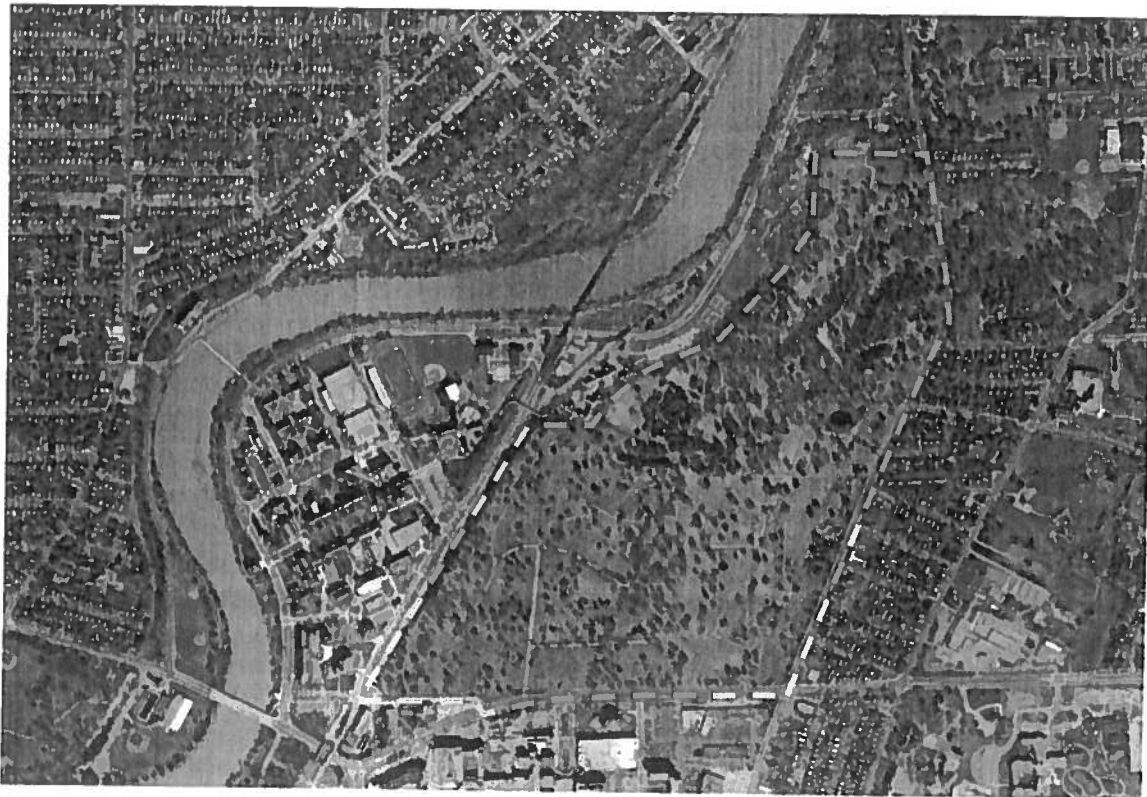
O'Leary, Susan Maney. *The Designed Historic Landscapes of Rochester, New York: An Historic Context Statement*. A project of The Landmark Society of Western New York and the Historic Landscape Preservation Committee. January 1997.

Peck, William F. *Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester*. Syracuse: D. Mason & Co., 1884.

Reisem, Richard. *Mount Hope, Rochester, New York: America's First Municipal Victorian Cemetery*. Rochester: Printing Methods, Inc., 1994.

Thomas, W. Stephen and Ruth Rosenberg-Naparsteck. "Sleepers' City: The Sesquicentennial History of Mt. Hope Cemetery." *Rochester History* Vol. L, No. 4 (October 1988).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS, PLANS, AND PHOTOGRAPHS



*Mt. Hope Cemetery, aerial photo. (Google / NYS GIS Clearinghouse)*



*Mt. Hope Cemetery, entry gate, 2009.*



*Mt. Hope Cemetery, fountain and former chapel, 2009.*



*Mt. Hope Cemetery, burial markers and varied topography, 2009.*

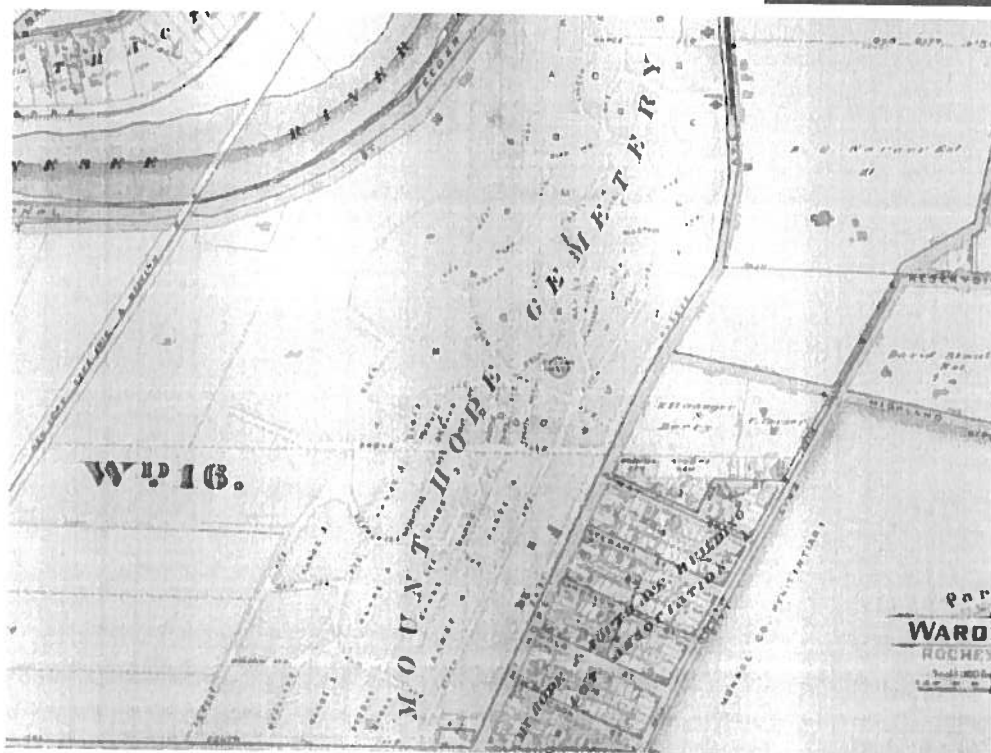




*Mt. Hope Cemetery, glacial kettle formation, 2009.*



*Mt. Hope Cemetery, southern portion of cemetery with less terrain variation, 2009.*



1888 plat map



rp01757.jpg Rochester Public Library Local History Division

*Mount Hope Cemetery, engraving by J.E. Young, 1838.*